

ST. MARY'S ASSUMPTION CHURCH (R.C.)
2030 Constance Street
at Josephine Street (S.E. Corner)
Orleans Parish
New Orleans, Louisiana

HABS No. LA-1106

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Richard Koch, District Officer
Queen and Crescent Building, New Orleans, Louisiana

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

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2030 Constance Street at Josephine
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The present owners are the Redemptionist Fathers, 2030 Constance Street, New Orleans, by whom the building was erected and by whom it has been continuously owned ever since.

The corner stone was laid April 25, 1858, and the church was consecrated June 24, 1860, the work on the building having been done under the supervision of Father Thaddeus Anwander. Many of the parishioners worked with the Fathers to build this and others of the adjacent structures. Even the women helped, carrying bricks in their aprons because the deep mud on Constance Street made vehicular traffic impossible.

The high altar of carved wood was imported from Munich and installed in 1874; the great organ was installed in 1861; three bells, the largest weighing 4,000 pounds, were installed at various dates, as were the stained glass windows.

This structure was preceded on this site by a small frame church, 90' x 45' x 21', resting on high pillars made of brick, erected in 1844; this was the first Roman Catholic church to be erected in what was then the town of Lafayette, now a portion of uptown New Orleans. It was also the first German Roman Catholic church to be erected in Louisiana, and was established to serve the needs of immigrants of German origin who had settled in that area.

This data is based on the booklet published by the Redemptionist Fathers, One Hundred Years in New Orleans, La. 1843-1943, Centenary Souvenir, Redemptionist Fathers, January 12, 13, 14, 1944, pp. 9, 10, 11, and 12.

A careful, but fruitless, search for the name of the architect has been made by Mr. Samuel Wilson, Jr., Queen and Crescent Building, New Orleans, La.

In March, 1845, a bell that was cast in another German settlement in Louisiana at Des Allemands, was installed in the small church; in July of the same year, the city council of the town of Lafayette remitted taxes on certain property provided the trustees agreed to ring the bell in case of an alarm of fire. (The Corner Stone, Centenary of St. Alphonsus Church, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1855-1955, B. J. Kroeger, C.S.S.R.) This bell is still in use in the small tower of the Mortuary Chapel adjacent to the church. (One Hundred Years in New Orleans, La., p. 12)

In the last named booklet, there are reproduced the following old views from originals in the possession of the Redemptionist Fathers:

First St. Mary's Church - 1844
St. Mary's Church, Exterior - 1860
St. Mary's Church, Interior - 1860

Further information might possibly be secured by reference to the files of old newspapers in the New Orleans Public Library.

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Descriptive Data

"Its measurements are one hundred and thirty-seven feet by sixty-nine feet with a height of forty-four feet, its tower rising to a height of one hundred and forty-two feet, surmounted by a cross ten feet in height. The tower contains a giant clock.....St. Mary's Church accommodates nine hundred persons." (Seventy-five Years of Service by S. J. Krieger, C.S.S.R. Bectold Printing and Book Mfg. Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1923)

Prepared by Georgia Bertha Drennan
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